



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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File

Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Henry: OSD REVIEWED 08-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

~~We have completed planning within DoD for the USG response to the Saudi Arabian request of June 15 for equipment to mechanize two infantry brigades.~~ You will recall that you conveyed the USG agreement to offer this equipment to the Saudis in Taif on September 2. We are aware that Prince Sultan and other Saudi leaders attach great importance to this request and that they feel a sense of urgency to have deliveries expedited. As you know, on September 17, Prince Sultan sent Ambassador Akins a letter in which he requested all deliveries be completed within 1 year.

We are aware also of possible Saudi misunderstandings over delivery dates. Information received indicates that Prince Sultan may have understood that deliveries of most items would be completed within 2 years, while the intent was to start deliveries in 2 years.

In an effort to be responsive and assist in furthering good relations with the Saudis, DoD is prepared to offer for training purposes early delivery of small quantities of key items like M60 tanks, APCs, and Dragon anti-tank missiles by diverting from production for the US Army. These early deliveries could be timed 4 to 12 months in advance of first deliveries of the bulk of the orders from uncommitted production (see attached delivery plan). Impact on US forces readiness would be limited, and the political benefits should be significant in ameliorating any Saudi disappointment or frustration which may be caused by differing perceptions of indicated delivery times. With these early deliveries the Saudis could begin hands-on training as advance preparation for receipt of the balance of their requests starting 2 years from now.

We are in the process of preparing Letters of Offer to present to the Saudis. Except for early delivery of the small increments for training, the bulk of the equipment will be delivered from normal FMS production. I believe it is important that you be aware that even this delivery would

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require placing Saudi Arabia first in line for uncommitted production, ahead of all other potential requests for FMS purchase from countries such as Israel, Spain and Jordan. This was the key assumption behind the delivery dates we provided to you prior to your discussions with the Saudis on September 2.

Subsequent to the Taif talks of September 2, DoD has contributed to the response to NSSM 231 on Israeli military requirements, and we are aware of high priority requests from other countries as well. The DoD position regarding NSSM 231 favors priority for Saudi Arabia over all countries for currently uncommitted production resources for certain critical items. Based on your discussions with the Saudis, we assume it is intended that this be the case.

Our Letters of Offer will be ready for release around mid-December. Most of them will be subject to review by Congress under the Nelson-Bingham Amendment. Once the apparent misunderstanding regarding delivery dates has been resolved with the Saudis, and assuming Congress does not pass a resolution to prevent release, we would be prepared to submit them to the Saudis for their acceptance if you concur.

Sincerely,

Bill Clements

Attachment
a/s

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No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/05/02 : LOC-HAK-209-2-49-4